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Recreation and Education

Broadcast by Blanche Brobeil, Payne Fellowship Student, Saturday, June 3, 1939, in the National 4-H Club program, National Farm and Home Hour.

For many of you 4-H members, this week has been our first one away from the routine of school and classes. I can imagine that you have spent most of it taking over your responsibilities on the farm and in the busy farm home. But having grown up on a farm, and having been a 4-H member, I feel safe in saying I know many of your thoughts have been turning to possibilities for recreation.

This first Saturday in June would seem to me a good time to take a long look at the personality that is "you" and to see in just what ways you would like to add to that personality during the summer. Were there times last year when you felt a little on the outside of your crowd because you didn't engage in many sports? If there were, this is the time to do something about it. When you go camping with your 4-H club this summer make a resolution to learn to swim. If you have a chance to play tennis, why not concentrate on perfecting your game.

Perhaps you have been embarrassed because you couldn't keep up your part of a conversation. It is a help to add to your wealth of conversational material by reading. There are several 4-H books available now. Have you read them? Or you might go traveling that fascinating but inexpensive way - by book.

You will find that hours filled with an absorbing hobby pass quickly. Some of you may enjoy trying your hand at marionettes. You who love nature and want to know more about it would enjoy learning to identify all the birds around your farm by their calls, or starting a collection of certain nature objects.

These few suggestions may have opened your imagination to numerous possibilities in recreational lines - in music and dramatics, handicrafts, reading, games and nature activities.

In addition to making you a more interesting person, recreational activities help you to grow in many ways. I have found it worthwhile to take a look at how recreation contributes to the education of the 4-H girl and boy. Wholesome recreation has come to be recognized as a way of learning to live with ourselves and our fellows in a more satisfying way.

Through recreational activities - individual, family, 4-H club, and community - 4-H members develop certain skills. Being able to play a good game of tennis, to swim, to ride, or to dance is an excellent introduction card into the groups young people want to enter in the home community, or when they leave to go to college or to seek work in a new environment. Learning to think quickly and originally can be accomplished through group games and in the carrying out of handicraft activities. Through meeting and playing together and participating in plays and skits, 4-H members learn to be at ease in a group. These are some of the best ways of giving young people poise and helping them to adjust themselves, comfortably, into groups of their own and other ages.

Families can have a great deal of fun playing together, and desirable family relationships are encouraged in this way. One family I know turned the gardening

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from a task into a festivity. Instead of each taking a turn at working there alone, whenever it was possible the whole family went there together and worked in the cool of the evening, singing as they hoed and pulled weeds. That summer a State-wide rural cast was presenting an opera at the 4-H girls' convention, and the whole family had learned the choruses. Everyone joined in the singing of the gay gypsy songs - until the garden seemed to take on the atmosphere of a gypsy encampment.

4-H club members know that we grow through giving. Recreational activities give girls and boys opportunities to serve their rural communities. Accepting leadership for games or group singing at a community meeting, improving a neighborhood play field, contributing time toward building an outdoor fireplace for community use - these are a few of the ways in which the ideal of community service can be strengthened, and at the same time leadership can be developed.

Many people think of recreation only as a glorious good time - others as a way of building healthy bodies. It is both of these - but something more. Recreation should open eyes to see the beauty and the opportunities in the commonplace and the everyday. It should open hearts to the joy of creative living.

Here's wishing you a happy summer.

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